

THE
L A M B
CALLING HIS
Followers
TO
Retirement.

Being an Humble Enquiry into the
duty of Churches, Ministers,
and all that fear the Lord,
under the present dis-
pensation of God.

By one that would be found
(though unworthy) the Lords
Witness and Servant, and
of all his S A I N T S.

I C O R. 4. 5.

Judge nothing before the time,

Printed in the year, 1662.



F
T

the
occ
ina
Sen
fel
the
tir
di
br
ju
pr
A
vo
pr
cu



TO THE
READER.

THe different apprehensions of the People of God in this day, concerning their present duty, (being cut off from their publick liberties of Worship) gave occasion to the ensuing Enquiry; some judging it of absolute necessity to assemble openly, though they expose themselves (or at least their Teachers) to the utmost hazard; others, that Retirement is that which the present dispensation calls for, which later this brief Discourse endeavours to prove, as justifiable from the Scripture, and the practise of the People of God in former Ages, but more especially to be the voice of the Lord to his people in the present day, in which there is a concurring judgement of many.

To the Reader.

But that Retirement which is first called to, namely, unto the Lord Jesus himself (which is briefly prest in the former part.) is that which is commended to all, as absolutely necessary, as ever they expect to be found under his wing at his coming and appearances; and, Reader, hear the call of Jesus Christ therein, that thou mayst lay up thy immortal soul with him, that when storms are coming upon the World, thou mayst be found in thy Sanctuary, in thy Chambers of Rest and Safety, where they shall not reach thee.

As to the Case of Retirement from open Assembling, it is plainly stated from Scripture evidence, as is humbly apprehended, wherein if there be not enough said to satisfie a doubting Conscience, yet, at least, there may be sufficient to engage humble and sober minds to a mutual forbearance.

The duties of all Saints, under this Retirement, are but briefly hinted, because of brevity, and in that they have

To the Reader.

have been more at large prest by the
servants of God, in the two years of
mercy we have enjoyed (as the peculiar
blessing of this City) to the honour of
the Lord Jesus, the establishment of the
Saints in the faith and worship of the
Gospel, and in the Resurrection of the
Cause of the Kingdom of Christ in these
Nations, the vindicating and asserting
whereof, hath, as is hoped, left a gracious
and powerful impression and savour up-
on the spirits of the Lords people, that
so they may be found the more quietly
submitting to the dispensation of the
Lord, as blessedly establisht in the fore-
mentioned truths, and may (in those
holy principles in which they have been
built up) continue in a more private
way, edifying one another in love, as
those (in this their retirement) that
are waiting for the speedy return of
their Lord, that when he comes he may
find them so doing. This you may do,
as under the wings of the Almighty, in
a probable security, and not hasten

To the Reader.

your selves into your own sufferings, and if the providence of God, single out any of you to a suffering testimony, in the loss of liberty, or goods, or to banishment, verily, you will know the tender heart of Jesus Christ towards you, and his faithfulness in making up all to you and yours, and that in this life, a hundred fold.

Be quiet you Captives of hope, for, in returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietnesse and confidence shall be your strength; And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into corners any more, but thine EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS. Do not think that the Lord is now at the end of twenty years work, and that the present dispensation is the last issue of all his glorious providences, you have sometime believed that the Exaltation of the Lord Jesus would be the issue of all the shakings the Lord
hath

To the Reader.

hath made in these Nations, and you have as great, if not a greater ground to abide in the same Faith as ever; Take heed of a bewildred Spirit under the dark providences the Lord is leading us, but consider what the Lord hath been doing, and what work hath been upon the wheele, and by faith labour to look to the end of the Lord, and you will be able quietly to wait for him.

I wish the Case in hand had been stated by an abler hand, but finding nothing herein, I have found my Spirit (often looking for light from the Father of lights) drawn out to cast in this mite, to the present Generation of the righteous, as hoping that the voice of the Lamb is in it, in the main scope of it; And though, it may be, in what is hinted about the death of the witnesses, I may differ from some of the Lords Servants, yet I promise my self their forbearance, it being an houre of enquiry, and we would be all glad to know

To the Reader.

the mind of Christ in our day. Something more may be offerd to consideration to clear those hints, and of the nature of the Kingdom of Christ in this World, if the Lord permit. Now the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, preserve all his in this houre of temptation, and lead us into his whole Counsel and Will, to whose immutable grace I commend thee, in the patient waiting for Zions Redemption,

The 25. of the *Resting,*
5. Month, *Thy Brother and*
1662. *Fellow-Servant in*
the Patience of Christ.

The



ESAY 26. 20.

*Come my People enter thou into thy
Chambers, and shut thy doors about
thee; hide thy self, as it were, for
a little moment, untill the in-
dignation be overpast.*

THE special *Wisdome* of the
People of God in all Ge-
nerations, under the *vari-*
ety of his dispensations,
hath been to know what the Lord
hath spoken, and called his People
to, under them, in the knowledge
of which hath been bound up their,
mercy and peace in every Genera-
tion.

All their miscarriages have been
for want of attending hereunto, ei-
ther in a day of peace and outward
blessing, or in a day of affliction and
judgement.

(2)

judgement. The safety of *this people* to whom this word was spoken, *Enter into thy Chambers, &c.* did lye in the obedience thereof at that day, which let us a little more particularly consider.

This Prophet, though many years before the day of it, spake of the Captivity of *Judah*, and also of her return and restauration, with the blessings that should attend it, which restauration he more at large begins to discover at the 14. Chap. *For the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet chuse Israel, and set them to their own Land, &c.* Upon which, the Prophet having denounced the *burden of the Lord* against *Babylon*, Chap. 13. threatens all other Nations to the 25. Chap. that but *helped* in or *rejoyced* at the day of his Peoples Captivity, as *Moab*, and *Syria*, and *Egypt*, and *Tyre, &c.*

As is more generally exprest, *ch.*

17. 12, 13, 14. *Wo to the multitude of many people, which make a noise, like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of Nations, that make a rushing of mighty waters; But God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar off, and shall be chased as the chaffe of the Mountains before the wind, and like a rouling thing before the whirlwind; what is the reason of all this? why, This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us; The restoring and salvation of Judah was accompanied with the distress of all the Nations round about her, and with the utter ruine of the Babylonish Monarchy, set forth, chap. 29.*

The great revolutions & periods of all the Nations of the World, have been the issues of the Captivity or Deliverance of the people of God, and God hath governed the World in subserviency thereunto.

The Prophet having thus spoken
of

(4)

of *Jacobs* deliverance, and the great Earth-quake of the Nations that should accompany it, At the 25, 26, and 27. chap. you have songs of praise referring to that day, mixt with promises of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Knowledge, Light, Peace, and Glory that should be the issue of the dispensation of grace by him to the Jews and Gentiles, even all the Nations of the Earth in this 26. chap. You have the song of praise continued, specially respecting *Judahs* gathering, magnifying the power of the Lord in her salvation, and in the ruine of *Babylon*, v. 4, 5. their posture in their captivity, v. 8. *lo we have waited for thee, &c. Their visiting the Lord* in their distresse, and *powering out prayer* before him, v. 16, 17, 18. At the 18th. verse they are brought in complaining, that they had been in *pangs*, yet had *wrought no deliverance in the Earth*, neither had

(5)

had the Inhabitants of the World fallen; At the 19. verse, the Lord by the Prophet gives an answer, that though in their Captivity they did lye as *dead men*, yet verse 19. *Thy dead men shall live, &c. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the Earth shall cast out her dead*; Thy resurrection from this Captivity and Death, shall be as the herbs that lye dead in Winter, but shall revive and *spring forth* again by the dews of the spring upon them, in the mean time, the Lord calls them to *retire*, and promiseth to *secure* them; *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, &c.*

Where, 1. You have the tender and affectionate *invitement* and call of God, *come my People*, whatever the World speaks of thee, and makes thee as an out-cast, yet still *my People, pretious* in my sight, under my eye and care, though *no man* careth

careth for thee; No matter if all the Nations of the World say, *go you out-casts*, if the Lord say, *come my people*.

2. *Where*, and to *what* he calls, *enter in thy Chambers*, retire thy self as into thy *strong hold* for safety; and *shut thy door about thee*, as when men retire into their houses from a storm, and shut their doors; further amplified, *Hide thy self*, how long? but for a *little moment*, till the *indignation be over-past*. Their crying out in pangs, their powering out of prayer, engaged the Lord to full mercy. 1. To *hide* them under the *indignation*. 2. To *hasten* to their *salvation*, and that speedily, it shall be but for a *moment*. Then will the Lord *come out of his place*, and that to admiration and astonishment; *for behold* his appearance shall be *wonderful and glorious*, in the *season* of it, and the *manner* of it; *He will punish the Inhabitants of the Earth*,

Earth, and the Earth shall disclose her blood, the blood of his Servants, spilt as water upon the ground by the Babylonians,) and shall no wise cover her slain ; Thus you have the words with their coherence opened.

The special thing I would take notice of (in order to the discovery of the mind and call of Christ to his Saints at this day) is the Lords *calling* of them into their *Chambers*, to shut their doors, to *hide* themselves ; which expressions denote this one thing in the general, namely, *Retirement*, which I shall give forth, in one observation, naturally and clearly decuced, as the scope of the Holy Ghost in them.

Ob. *The Lord Jesus Christ in his providential Dispensations sometimes calls his People to Retirement.*

That I may more particularly discover what I mean by *Retirement*.

Jesus Christ calls his people to
retire.

retire. 1. Within himself. 1. As to all manner of Protection.

2. As to more close and intimate *Communion.*

2. He calls them to *Retirement*, as to *Publick Services*, and *administrations*.

1. He calleth them to *retire* under his shade for *Protection*; so he was said to *spread his wings* over his People, as an *Eagle doth over her young ones*, in the *Wilderness* of old, *Deut. 32*. And in the day of the Nations wrath, when in a *confederacy* against his people, they are called his *hidden ones*, *Psal. 83*. They *consult*, but tis against thy *hidden ones*; and so that pretious word of grace, where the Lord holds out his arms to his poor ones in a stormy day, *Esay 4. 6*. *There shall be a Tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a cover from storm and from rain.*

So *Gh. 25. 4*. (And let them be words

words of faith, to all Saints) for thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible one is against the wall, ch. 32. 2. A man (the man Christ Jesus) shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.

And thus the Saints in stormy times bespeak the Lord, and have fled into him as their refuge and hiding place; So David often, keep me as the apple of thine eye, hide me under the shadow of the wings, Psal. 17. 8. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man, thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, Psal. 31. 8. In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his Pavillion, in the secret of his Tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me upon a Rock, Psal. 27. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, untill these Calamities be overpast, Psal. 57. 1. Of which

Yob

B

David

David in all his persecutions and wanderings, had abundant and sweet experience in the review and recollection of which he breaks forth into the praises of the Lord; his heart being warmed with the sense of the Lords goodness and love, Psal. 18. I will love thee, (or I will dearly love thee) Oh Lord my Strength, the Lord my Rock, my Fortrefs, and my Deliverer, my God, my Strength in whom shall I trust, my Buckler, and the hope of my Salvation, and my High-Tower.

Upon which experience he gives forth, everlasting words of grace for all the People of God to trust upon in all Generations, as Psal. 9. 9. *The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble, Psal. 91. 1, 2. He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, with many more words to the same purpose 5 The Lord at that day*

(II)

day of indignation from the house of *Saul* and all the mighty men of *Israel*, against *David* and such as did adhere to him, calling *David* to retire as into his chambers, from the storm that was against him, till the indignation was overpast, and the Lord *bid* him from the wrath of man, as hath been shewed.

Of the same import is that word, *Prov. II. 10. The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, and the righteous runneth into it and are safe.* There are three Names of God to which his people in a day of indignation fly unto.

The name of his *Goodness*; that Name which the Lord made known and proclaimed to *Moses*, after the People of God had sinned, and *Moses* had cryed to him for the forgiveness of their sin, and begs his presence may go with them; *I will make (saith the Lord) all my goodness to pass before thee, Exod. 33. 19.*

and chap. 34. 6. *The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed. The Lord God Merciful and Gracious, long suffering, abundant in goodness, in truth, &c.* So when David pleads with God in his distresse, *Psal. 89.* the argument of Faith is, v. 5. *For thou Lord art good, and therefore ready to forgive, &c.* and when he flies unto God, *Psal. 31.* he makes this as the wing of God, the Name of his goodness, vers. 19. *Oh how great is thy Goodness thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men, thou shalt hide them, &c.* And *Psal. 144.* *My Goodness, my Fortress, and my high Tower, &c.* not onely my good good, but goodness it self, &c. Yea this Name of God that he proclaimed to *Moses*, was as the great refuge of the Saints in the day of their distresse, and which they urged upon him, as *Psal. 86.* and *103.* and *145.* and *Neh. 9. 17. 31.* because
in

in all Generations hee would be known to his people by this Name, and by Faith they were to live upon it, in all their difficulties ; *The Lord abundant in goodness, and mercy, and truth, &c.* And when Judah was going into captivity, the Lord offers himself to them by this Name if they would turn unto him, and commands *Jeremiah* to proclaim it, as it was proclaimed before *Moses*, *Jer. 3. 12. Go and proclaim these words towards the North, and say, Return thou back-sliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to come upon you, (or to settle upon you,) for I am merciful, &c.* A heart-breaking word, if that people had hearkened to it.

To this Name of the Lord do his people retire for shelter and refuge in an evil day, though they have sinned against him ; we have sinned, yet the Lord is infinitely good, and therefore ready to for-

give; *Who is like unto him, a God pardoning iniquity, Micah 7.* And therefore where ever the Lord gives out promises of help and deliverance to his People from captivity and destresse, hee also annexeth free promises of grace, in abundant forgivenesse, *Esay 43. 16, 17.* speaking of the glorious Salvation of his people; though they had wearied them with their iniquities, verse 24. yet I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins, see chapter 24. 22. see *Jeremiah 33. 5, 6, 7.* Behold I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, (though a wounded, broken, scattered people) and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth, and verse 8. I will cleanse them from all the iniquity whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against

against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me; though Against me, (thrice repeated) against all my kindnesse to them, and my often *Salvation* of them, yet I will cleanse them, and though they are become a reproach to all Nations, yet it shall be to me a Name of joy, a praise and honour, before all the Nations of the Earth; See *Jeremiah* 51. 5. for *Israel* hath not been forsaken, nor *Judah* of his God, of the Lord of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*. Under these wings of grace thus spread forth in pretious promises, do a poor, sinfull, broken people shelter themselves, in *humbling* and *turning* to the Lord, and they are safe, this being the great Covenant Name of God they fly to, and take hold of in all their sins and distresses.

Secondly, the People of God retire into the Name of his *Almightiness*

ness, Psal. 91. 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide, (or lodg as in a house of defence) under the shadow of the Almighty, &c. As a God infinitely able to preserve and keep safe all the concernments of soul and life, that his people commit to him, able to save in, and out of all distresses, from every snare of the Devil, from the wrath of man, as Paul, 2 Timothy 1. 12. For I know when I have believed, and am persuaded that he is Able to keep what I have committed to him, &c.

Thirdly, The Name of the Lords Everlastingness, sameness, unchangeableness, is a Refuge to retire to; Abraham called on the Name of the Lord, the Everlasting God, Genesis the 21. the last verse. So the Lord comforteth his people, Esay 40. 28. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth,

Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, &c. So the People of God in their Plea, Esay 63. 16. Thy name is from Everlasting, &c. And Psal. 102. Where is set forth a day of sore indignation and distresse, as verse 10. Thou hast lifted us up, and cast us down, &c. What is their stay and Refuge in such a case, why this, verse 12. But thou, ob Jehovah shalt endure for ever. And ver. 27. But thou art the same, &c. And though wee perish, thou art the same; Thou art the same in thy Covenant, mercy is from everlasting and to everlasting, &c. The same in goodness, pity, and wisdom, and power, the faithful God, that keepest Covenant and Mercy for ever, as good to save as ever thou wast, and as able to save; so hee strengthens and comforts his People with the discovery of his Name, Mallachi 3. 6. For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob

coh are not consumed. Let the state of the people of God be what it will, there is support in this, *Thou Lord art still the same*; we have known what thou hast been to thy people in dayes of old, and what thou hast done for them; Oh, where are thy former loving kindnesse, &c. The Covenant of God with his people is built as upon two Pillars, *Mercy and Faithfulness*, Psal. 89. 2. For I have said, *Mercy shall be built up for ever, thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens*; I have made a Covenant with my chosen, &c. Under these two doth *David* shelter, as the Wings of the Cherubims, 57. 1, 2. God shall send forth his *Mercy and Truth*, and shall save me, *Mercy* to pittie and forgive, *Faithfulness* to fulfil his Word, here is a safe shelter for Saints; in every strait *David*, and other of the people of God, get under these Wings of God, and are at peace; *David*
near

near twenty times in the Psalms is putting these two together, thy Mercy and thy Truth shall prevent me, and in them I trust; If all the Mercy of God, and all the Truth and Faithfulness of God be my portion, what need I fear? here is sweet and safe retirement for Saints in an evil day.

But how do poor Souls *retire* into this Blessed Name of God, a Merciful, Almighty, Unchangeable God, as a *Rock* for them.

1. By seeing thorough the Light of the Spirit, the Emptiness and Vanity of all other refuges, that nothing below an unchangeable God of all Grace, through Jesus Christ, can be a refuge for a Naked and Forlorne Soul, in *Psalm 62*. David mentions two things, which the heart is apt to make a *refuge*, *Men* and *Riches*, *vers. 9, 10.* of both these he saith, they are a *lie*, and *vanity*;
And,

And, *if riches increase, set not your heart upon them*; do not think them a meet refuge for you in any day, specially a day of distress; if neither the *sons of men* nor *riches* be a shelter, then, *in God*, saith David, *is my Salvation and my Glory, the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God*; Yea, He *onely* is my Rock, v. 6. see Psal. 142. 4, 5. *I looked, &c. v. 4.* And what did he see? Why, *Refuge failed him*, every refuge was too low, too short, too weak, to shelter him, here was conviction of nothing but emptyness in them, *vanity* upon them all; What then? why, *vers. 5.* *I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion*, there is that in Jesus Christ to *ensafe* me and *satisfie* me (the two great ends to which the soul moves in all its desires) now I have them not in Creatures, they can't be a refuge, not a portion, but God in Christ is
both,

both, is All, This is a conviction we should pass under every day.

2. We retire into this Blessed Name of the Lord, *by Faith, He is a Rock*, Psalm. 62. *the Rock of Ages*, or the Everlasting Rock, nothing below himself is so ; Faith sees him so, as a sinking man in the Waters sees a Rock, and makes to it, and sees him *onely*, he *onely* is my Rock ; Now heres the ensafeing Act of Faith, it can lay up all concernments of Soul and Life, with an unchangeable God ; here I adhere, fasten, cleave ; Oh, O that Blessed Glorious Name, a Gracious, Almighty or All-sufficient, and Unchangeable Saviour, in the day of my trouble. *Oh* set me on this Rock, that *is higher then I*, Psal. 61. 2. Then let Waves and Billows beat against me, they may break themselves, but shall never break the Rock ; *I shall not be moved,*

ved, *Psal. 62.* That's the stability
 faith gives the *soul*, let Sins, Temp-
 tations, Troubles, beat against
 me, I shall not be moved; thus
 Faith can triumph *at all times*. Trust
 in him *at all times*, God is a refuge
 for us; In shaking times, in dy-
 ing times, all is safe with him, yea
 when the Heart is *overwhelmed*
 and *desolate*, Faith thus relieves and
 fetcheth up the Heart in all its sink-
 ings; let the Soul see a storm com-
 ing, away it hastens into its Re-
 fuge, into the Chambers of strength,
 and shuts its door, till it be *over-*
past.

Because this is the Work of
 Saints, and the call of the Lord to
 them at this day; Consider it a lit-
 tle further.

First, Jesus Christ presents him-
 self to a poor soul as an *open refuge*,
 let

let the sin, burden, distress, inward or outward be what it will, this door of Grace stands open, the sinners of the World pass by it, and will not enter (the more their misery) but poor souls that are beaten out of one hold, after another and see at last this door of hope opened, in the valley of Darkness and Fears runs into it; unbelief would draw the Soul back, *Satan* would shut the Door against it, but the soul ventures (and venture it must or sink and perish) and gets into Christ, and he holds out a hand, and bears it up, opens Blood, and Righteousness, and Grace, and bids the soul make use of it; and here the Soul *retires* every day, under this shelter tis driven, and it can be quiet and safe no where else, if the heart be stealing out else where, to other shelters in the World, or of its own, Satans World and Conscience

(24)

ence fet upon it ; And the Soul flies back, and gets into its strong hold again ; No living safely else where ; Now Jesus Christ is an *open* refuge, in every precious word of free Grace, *Esay* 55. 1. *Rev.* 21. 6. 22. 17. &c. which words Believers see as a blessed safe Retirement, when they are stormd out of every thing else, and evidences are bemist-ed.

Secondly, Jesus Christ presents himself a *sure* refuge for Souls to Retire into ; He sprinkles blood, casts a Mantle of Righteousnesse, a Mantle of Love, and Grace, and Power, over the soul that gets into him, and who then can harm it ? Guilt, and Sorrows, and Temptations, and Pressures, can follow the soul to the Door, but cannot enter with it ; *He is near that justifieth, who then shall contend ?* *Esay*

50. 8.

50. 8. there is safety. Tis true, the soul is not alwayes apprehensive of its own safety, but hath its fits of Fears and Mis-givings, through Temptation and Unbelief, as in Davids Case (and mark it) Psal. 31. 22. *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, neverthelesse thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cryed unto thee, here was sad Apprehension, — I am cut off,* (though he had words of Promise to the contrary) but yet he cryed to the Lord in that distemper, but what, did the Lord cast him off, because of that mixture of unbelief? No, *neverthelesse* he heard and saved him; a Case of great relief for Dark, Doubting Souls. So that Jesus Christ is a safe, sure, strong, impregnable shelter, all the World can't get a soul out of it, all is safe there.

Obj. But may not my life go for it, for all this?

Answer, That which is indeed thy life, the life of thy soul, the immortal life, that is most safe hid (or laid) with Christ in God; Col. 3. 3. *Because I live, you shall live also,* John 14. your life is as safe as my life, tis bound up with my own, yea tis the same with my own, the life I live, I live in you. As Christ lives in the Father, so Believers live in him, and have their life fed in him, and from him, and therefore they shall *never die*, but have *Eternal Life*; What more? Then to live for ever, and so to live for ever, as Christ himself lives, surely thats a Blessed, Safe, and Glorious Life; This is your Life.

But

But secondly, If Jesus Christ will *use* thy natural life in all the concernments of it, who shall reach thy life? Not the World, not all the Persecutions of it, no nor thy *liberty* neither; Jesus Christ hath charged himself with both, and all the interests of thy life, he will order thy race, and every step thereof, to that end in which he will most be glorified in thee, and therefore be putting it by faith into his hand every day; and say as Jesus Christ himself did, in the interest of his life, *Father Glorifie thy Name*; *John* 12. 29. This was when our Dear Saviour (as a man) was solicitous about *his* life, and *his* ~~soul~~ *soul* was troubled, and cries, *save me from this hour*, vers. 27. but yet bows to the Will of his Father, *Glorifie thy Name*.

No man shall touch thy life, till thou shalt say, *I have finished the Work that my Father gave me to do, John 17. 4.* So that Jesus Christ hath charged himself with the care of thy life, liberty and all the interests thereof, as well as with the precious life of thy Soul.

Thirdly, the loosing thy life, is the *saving* and *finding* of it, as to life Eternal; the death of thy natural life, makes way for the True, Spiritual, Immortal, Glorious life, The cutting off this momentary life, issues in a higher and more excellent life, so that there can be no miss of it; faith sees, a life in death, and that by it Mortality is swallowed up of life; Thus Jesus Christ is a shelter to thy life.

And so I have opened how
Jesus

Jesus Christ calls his Saints to retire into himself, by way of safety and protection.

Secondly, *Christ* calls his own to retire into a more intimate communion with him, in a time of indignation, when storms are up.

The second Thing.

2. This call of *Jesus Christ* into a more intimate Communion with him, should blessed souls attend to in such a day; into the Chambers of his Presence; so *Song of Solamon*, chap. 1. 9. Draw me, we will run after thee, the King hath brought me into his Chambers, we will be glad and rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy love, more then Wine, the upright love thee; there is sweet and intimate communion.

Now how doth the Lord bring
a soul to this?

Answer, *Jesus Christ* shews
himself to the soul, in a greater
Beauty and Glory, then a soul
had seen him before, and thereby
Humbles, Empties, and Awakens,
brings it lower, and to be viler in
its own eyes, takes down all the
high thoughts and conceits of it
self, makes the Soul know its own
poverty, whereby it becomes less
then the least of all Saints, ren-
ders pride, and passion, and self-
ishness, and temerity, and censo-
riousness, and hypocrisie, with all
fleshly corruptions, more abo-
minable and loathsome, and the
soul abhors it self in the dust (too
good for it) & is burthened, and
groans under the pressures menti-
oned, cries & mourns after, a fur-
ther

(31)

ther *cleansing, healing,* and a more
pretious *conformity to Jesus Christ,*
cries out for the Spirit, for Holiness,
for Light and Strength, and
cannot live without them; this
is the way to more intimate communion,
here is a *Vision* of the
Lord Jesus, in his Holiness, Beauty,
and Glory, that renders the
Soul thus infinitely vile in it self,
and draws out such a panting after
him; Then it hath further
Attractives of love, --- *We will
remember thy love more then Wine;*
Then, how Free, how Pretious,
how Eternal, how Glorious is the
Lords love to a worthless wretch,
whose sin is worse then the sin of
Devils (for they never sin against
this love) Oh that the Lord
should not onely in pitty save
me, but in love die for me; who
can reach or understand it?

C 4

Thus

Thus is Glory and Love let in upon the soul ; And then *the upright love thee* ; Oh that I might love the Lord uprightly ; love him, and love him uprightly, love him for himself, love his Glorious Person, be enamoured with the Beauties of his Holiness, that I might see his Glory, and forever admire and adore him ; thus souls, when he pleaseth thus to shew himself, are taken into his Banqueting House, and his Banner over them is love ; they retire into him, and sit under his shadow with great delight, and his Fruit is sweet to their tast, Song of Solomon, 2. 3, 4. This is precious and Heavenly employment, in such a day when the Lamb calls to Retirement, when the heat of the Sun begins thoroughly to beat against it, and the soul finds little shadow in the World, then the shadow
of

of this *Rock in a weary land* (a land of sin and trouble) is sweet and pleasant retirement indeed.

The effect of this Special Retirement into the *Chambers* of our Lord Jesus, under his *shadow*, is sweet peace, and rest of mind and spirit, when the *Waves and Billows* come against us, a blessed *stillnesse*, a composed acquiescency in the Lord, and a free resignation to him, the allaying and rebuking the tumultuous workings of our hearts, a casting our care upon the love, and care, and faithfulnesse of the Lord in every condition; *In the Multitude of my thoughts* (my careful thoughts) within me, *thy comforts delight my soul*, *Psal. 94. 19.* yea in this blessed Retirement, cries out, *Return into thy Rest, oh my soul*; Thou hast been wandering after other rest, too too much, but hast

hast not found where to put thy feet, therefore now return to thy sweet, safe, proper Rest ; abide and dwell there, and that for ever. So the soul can in some good measure, sanctifie the Name of the Lord, by believing and trusting on him, and waiting for him, making Christ his Portion and Everlasting strength, and doth in patience possess it self.

One word by way of more particular Application.

I. If this Retirement into Jesus Christ, into the chambers of his Grace, be the great interest of souls ; What a case then are poor forlorne sinners in that have no shelter for soul or life, or any thing, but what the wide World (as you speak) can afford them, which will not keep off a storm,

not

not one drop of the Wrath of the
 Almighty? Verily the Wrath of
 the jealous God is ready to come
 forth into the Nations of the
 earth [after a little stillness that
 hath been upon them] who is
 coming [and saints do hear the
 sounding of his feet] to tread up-
 on them in his wrath, and tram-
 ple them in his fury, *Esay 63.* and
 then where will all your shelters
 be? When it shall be said to the
 scoffers at the report of his day,
Behold you despisers, and wonder
and perish, for the Anger of the
 Lord shall smoe against you; Oh
 awake and tremble, believe and
 tremble, and see your confiden-
 cies to be lying vanities, men and
 riches, and strength, are a lye,
 and they shall not, cannot save
 you in the day of the Lords in-
 dignation; Oh be convinced of
 it, see the Lord Jesus, in his
 blood

blood, righteousnesse, free promises of Grace, an open shelter, where you may fly and be safe; Oh get thy polluted, guilty, betrayed soul, into thy shelter, make hast to get thy soul washed, justified, sanctified, renewed in the Blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, get the Mantle of his Righteousnesse over thee, and his spirit to quicken thee; or thou shalt perish from the way without remedy.

2. Doth Jesus Christ call his Saints into his Chambers, to retire with him, and that for protection and more intimate Communion. Oh let this be the Word of the Lord to all the Lambs followers; Now Jesus Christ hath for a Moment withdrawn, is gon behind the Clouds; cry, draw us, and we will run after thee.

Now

Now know and see more Expe-
 rimentally, that *Name* that is in-
 deed a *strong Tower*, that cove-
 nanting Name that hath been set
 before you, *The Lord gracious and*
abundant in goodnesse; let thy soul
 say, *This is my Rock, a Gracious,*
Almighty, Immutible God in Christ
God the same yesterday, and to
day, for ever, unchangeable in
Grace, Goodness, Wisdom, Pow-
er, Love, and that because of a
Covenant built upon the Pillars of
Mercy and faithfulness that are
for ever; *This is my House of De-*
ference, here will I dwell; *This is*
my Rock, and I shall not be mo-
ved; *Here is your life, your*
strength, your safety, your all.
 Oh see what an *open and sure*
 Refuge Jesus Christ is, your sins
 and guilt cannot enter in with
 you, but you leave them at the
 door, say, Ah Lord, spread the
 Man-

blood, righteousness, free promises of Grace, an open shelter, where you may fly and be safe; Oh get thy polluted, guilty, betrayed soul, into thy shelter, make hast to get thy soul washed, justified, sanctified, renewed in the Blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, get the Mantle of his Righteousness over thee, and his Spirit to quicken thee; or thou shalt perish from the way without remedy.

2. Doth Jesus Christ call his Saints into his Chambers, to retire with him, and that for protection and more intimate Communion. Oh let this be the Word of the Lord to all the Lambs followers; Now Jesus Christ hath for a Moment withdrawn, is gone behind the Clouds, cry, draw us, and we will run after thee.

Now

Now know and see more Expe-
 rimentally, that *Name* that is in-
 deed a *strong Tower*, that cove-
 nanting Name that hath been set
 before you, *The Lord gracious and*
abundant in goodnesse; let thy soul
 say, *This is my Rock, a Gracious,*
Almighty, Immutable God in Christ
God the same yesterday, and to
day, for ever, unchangeable in
Grace, Goodness, Wisdom, Pow-
er, Love, and that because of a
Covenant built upon the Pillars of
Mercy and faithfulness that are
for ever; *This is my House of De-*
cease, here will I dwell; *This is*
my Rock, and I shall not be mo-
ved; *Here is your life, your*
strength, your safety, your all.
 Oh see what an *open and sure*
Refuge Jesus Christ is, your sins
 and guilt cannot enter in with
 you, but you leave them at the
 door, say, Ah Lord, spread the
 Man-

Mantle of thy Righteousnesse over me, let thy banner over me be love, and what ever the storm be, I shall be safe; in the heat of the day, under the shadow of this Rock, will I sit; put me under unchangeable love and grace, and Lord I shall be safe; say of him, Thou *only* shalt be my *portion* and my *refuge*, into thy Chambers, Oh Lord, I enter (draw me into them) under thy wings will I make my Refuge, till the *Indignation* be over past.

Oh accept me, heal me, hold me to thy self, keep me, hide me in thy Chambers of Grace, watch over me night and day. Yea, Lord, lead me into a nearer Communion with thee, shew me thy Holinesse and thy Glory, that I may be yet more vile in my own sight before thee; Ab^{horr} humble me, empty me of all,

new

new season me, new frame me,
 with seven times more holiness
 then before; Conform me to
 thy self to purpose, and for e-
 ver *Commune* with me, Reckon
 me, my dear Lord, as thy *Friend*
 and *Companion*, as thy sweet ac-
 quaintance; Oh take my heart,
 fill me with love, and let us ne-
 ver, never part any more; Oh
 thus should be the breathings
 and pangs of our souls after our
 Lord Jesus in such a day. This
 is to enter into his Chambers, in-
 to his Rest.

Thirdly, As to outward safe-
 ty, Enter into *his* Chambers, say
 with *David*, Thou shalt *hide* me
 in the *secret* of thy *presence*;
 Lord, Thou art my hiding place,
 Yea Lord, let all thy People be
 thy *hidden ones*; Call them into
 thy Chambers, hide them from
 the pride and rage of man. Seek
 the

the Lord; It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger, Zeph. 2. 3. you have at least an *It may be*, for it; Who knoweth but the Lord will hide, wonderfully (for so it must be) and keep this *Generation* of his people, though they dwell in the fire; wonderful it is to see the *Bush burning*, and yet not consumed.

The Lord hath gloriously triumphed in the death of some of his Witnesses, who by dying have overcome (more than by signal battels in the field) and it may be hath some more to set to their Seal the same way, but this *Generation* of people shall enter their Chambers, and shall yet be further hid, till the Lord come out of his place, and the earth disclose her blood. As I have believed, so have I spoken.

Blessed

Blessed be the Lord, who remembers his people in these poor Nations; and will not cast them off: For thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favour wilt thou compass them as with a shield: Thou art good, and ready to forgive, and thou wilt forgive the sin of thy people, (though they have been a rebellious Seed) because they be thy people, and thy Name is in them, and thy great glory is conferred upon them; for the needy shall not alwayes be forgotten, nor shall the expectation of the poor fail from before thee. And thus much of the first branch of the Proposition. We now come to the second thing, viz.

The Lord Jesus Christ sometimes calls his Saints to retirement from publike Services, and publike Administrations of worship.

D

We

We would prove this; and *when* the Lord so calls; and *why* he calls them to such a *retirement*.

The two great instances of the Old and New Testament, do confirm this.

1. That of the people of God in *Babylon*, where the *remnant* of the best people were carryed, according to the Word of the Lord to them by *Jeremiah*, and there the Lord promiseth to be a *little Sanctuary* to them, *Ezek. 11. 13.* but there they had no *Temple* nor *Sacrifices* while they were in their captivity, but were to live in the Faith of their return from the *Captivity*, when the *Temple* should be built again; and they were to humble themselves to the Lord, and to cry to him till it were accomplished: So that here the Lord in that day of distress, promiseth to take care of the Remnant, *Ezek. 11. 13.* according to the plea of the Prophet, *Ab*

Lord

Lord God; wilt thou make a full end of the Remnant of Israel; And the Lord promisseth to restore them, to bring them back to their Land, and to give them his Ordinances as in the dayes past: Yet during their captivity, they were deprived of all positive worship, of all publike Administrations, but lived in the Faith of their return, according to the Word of Lord by his Prophets to them.

So in the New-Testament times, daring the Captivity of the true Worshippers and Witnesses of Jesus Christ under the Mystical Babylon; The true Church is call'd in to the Wilderness; where she hath a place prepared of God, where she should be fed, Rev. 12.6. where she lieth hid: And though there is a Temple measured, Rev. 11.1. yet 'tis as shew up, till at the pouring out of the Vials, the Temple is opened,

Rev. 15. 5. But especially towards
 the end of the Beasts reign, when
 the Witnesses have prophesied more
 openly, and have finished a Testimo-
 ny, to all the Offices of Jesus Christ,
 especially that of his Kingly Pow-
 er over Saints and Nations, (the
 Nations that are found in the Spi-
 rit of the Beast, make war against
 them, and slay them; that is, lay
 their Testimony dead, as if the ef-
 fects of it should never appear: All
 publike Prophesying, and publike
 Administrations of Worship, are
 cut off, and laid dead (wherein
 the last slaying of the Witnesses
 doth specially consist) yet the main
 body and generation of the Saints
 preserved; but so, as they are in all
 respects, either Civil or Ecclesia-
 stical, call'd off from the publike
 Stage, to a retired condition, and do
 lye as dead men (onely they are not
 buried, but are, as it were, still kept
 above

above ground) all the Spirit of Life from God enter into them: So at the Text, when the People of God are called into their Chambers, he said, in the 19th. verse of the 26. chap. of *Isaiah*, *Thy dead men shall live, &c.* while in their captivity, they lay as dead men.

So *Hosea* 6. 1, 2. When smitten and wounded in their captivity, they shall lie as dead; but after two dayes, he will revive them.

But more particularly, when both the Lord call them thus to retirement, call them off from the publick stage, and bids them enter into their Chambers,

In the case of the text, when the wrath of man is kindled against them, when the Nations and people among whom they converse, are in a conspiracy against them, and say of *Br-*

on, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion, Micah the 4th. and the 11th. Verse. Then he knoweth how to hide his people as in his Pawillion; then shall they be his hidden ones. Psal. 83. So he hid the seven thousand in Samaria, that did not bow the knee to Baal, whom the text saith, He reserved to himself, Rom. the 11th. chap. ver. 4. And yet that people, at that day, were under an obligation of Worship at the Temple at Hierusalem; but God did indulge them, as may further bee shewed.

So (as hath been hinted) the Lord hides the Woman in the wilderness from the Wrath of the Dragon, who casts a Flood after her,

2dly, Jesus Christ calls his people to retirement, when he reserves them

them for a Day of Mercy and greater Service, and a more pure Reformation, when hee thus layes them dead in order to a more glorious resurrection. So in severall Ages have they been wonderfully kept under the variety of the Lord's Dispensations to them; as in *Egypt*, and *David*, and the remnant of *Judab* that adhered to them: Many instances might be given.

3dly, The Lamb calls to retirement when he hath been *contesting* with the Spirit of the Beast in any of the Nations, by the *called*, and *faithful*, and *chosen*, *Rev. 17. 14*. When he hath set on foot his controversy with any of the *Horns*, and hath *overcome* them, hath often carried it against him, yet hee suffers his Enemies to rally again, and his own followers are scattered; when he seems to turn aside from

the pursuit, to drink of the Brook in the way, (as it were) to refresh himselfe, and then makes a short turn to the Prey again, Psalm 110. Verse the last, that hee may gather his Enemies as sheaves into his floor, Micah 4. 12, 13. and will make the Horn of the Daughter of Zion as Iron, to thresh them in such a day. The Lamb withdraws and retires, and calls his Saints to retire with him: And this is to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, Revel. 14. to go as he goeth, and to retire as he retires, and not to run out without him, upon any account whatsoever. In such a season the Lamb doth indulge them, nay call them off from their publike Administrations and Services, and Prophefyinges, and they are to wait till the Cloud appear and goe before them, in which they can see the Presence of the Lamb, and heare his Voice calling

calling them thereto. *43th*, The Lord (as it follows from the former, calls them to retirement, *when* hereby he will *fit* and *separate* a generation to *follow* him in his next appearing, when hee will prepare them in the fire, *melt* them, and *try* them, Jer. 9. 7. *I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the Daughter of my people? Then he will cast out the treacherous dealers from among them, as Verle 4. of that 9th. of Jeremiah; Take heed every one of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any Brother; for every Brother will supplant, &c. And they will deceive every one his Brother, and will not speak the truth, ver. 5. Now God will discover and cast out such a mixture and spurious from among his people, in the*

the day that he will *melt* them, and *try* them, v. 7. and *Ezek.* 22. 18, &c.

When the Lord is doing this work, by letting out the wrath of man upon them, he then calls them to retirement.

2. *Why* doth the Lord thus call them? &c.

1. The Lord calls his people into their *Chambers*, into a *retired* condition, to express his *tenderness* of them, as he calls them the *Apple of his Eye*, *Zach.* 2. 8. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine eye*, &c. *Keep me as the Apple of thine eye*, *Psal.* 17. and his *peculiar Treasure*, *Exod.* 19. 5. *Psal.* 135.

4. Such a day is a day of *making up his jewels*, *Mal.* 3. 17. referring to a day of retirement, when *the wicked were set up*, v. 15. then when he makes them up, he not onely *purifies* them, and puts a lustre upon them,

them; but *s pares them as a Father spares his Son*, and doth not spend them, but rarely, upon the rage of men.

2. The Lord thus takes them into his Chambers, that the *glory of his Power* may be seen in *restraining* the wrath of man, and causing it to praise him; that his people should be in the waters, and not be overwhelmed; and in the fire, & not be consumed; this is because the Lord is with them, *because he is the Lord their God, the holy One of Israel, their Saviour*, Isa. 43. 2, 3. That the Enemies of his People should not be able to act their own counsels, nor to execute their own rage, by a mighty hand of God restraining. This is, and should be marvellous in the eyes of his people.

3. The

3dly, The Lord calls to retire-
 ment, when the generation of the
 ungodly and oppressors are *ripen-
 ing for wrath*; then doth the Lord
lay up his people in the secret of his
 Presence; so *Psal. 91.* which is a
 word holding out the Lord's *bi-
 ding* of his people, as hath been
 hinted, So see verse 8. 9. Only
 'with thine eyes shalt thou behold,
 'and see the reward of the wicked;
 'Ec. Thou shalt tread upon the
 'Lion and Adder, the young Ly-
 'on and the Dragon shalt thou
 'trample under foot, v. 13. Now
 the People of God will discern
 through the light of the Spirit in
 the Word, the Marks and Cha-
 racters of a generation of God's
 Wrath, which in this place I shall
 not insist on. They are such as
 these:

'When a generation of men do
 'worse then their Fathers, Jer. 7. 2.

'and

' and chap. 16. 12, 13. *Ye have*
 ' *done worse than your Fathers,* for
 ' *behold ye walk every one accor-*
 ' *ding to the imagination of his e-*
 ' *vil heart, &c. therefore will I cast*
 ' *you out of this Land, &c.* And
 ' *this in a Land of Vision,* and after
 ' the hand of God hath been emi-
 ' nently lifted up against them;
 ' When a people return to Idola-
 ' try, and Antichristian abomina-
 ' tions, when Jesus Christ hath
 ' begun to reform a Nation, as in
 ' the dayes of *Manasseh*; When
 ' such a generation do *declare their*
 ' *sin as Sodom,* Isa. 5. When abomi-
 ' nable uncleanness, excess and ri-
 ' or, and all manner of villany is
 ' acted as at noon-day; When they
 ' persecute the Prophets, and Mei-
 ' sengers of the Lord, that they
 ' may not speak unto the people,
 ' 2 Chron. 36. 16. *But take away the*
 ' *Key of Knowledge,* Luke 17. with
 Mar.

Mat. 23. *forbidding* the servants of
 Christ to *speake unto the people*, that
 they may fill up their sin alwayes,
 and *wrath come upon them to the ut-*
most, 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. (which the
 Spirit of God gives as a Cha-
 racter of a people filling up their
 measure.

When a generation shall do-
 ingly *blaspheme the spirit of the*
Lord Iesus, calling it an *unclean*
Spirit, Matt. 12. 24. 31. as the Pha-
 risees at that day call'd the Spirit
 by which Iesus Christ did preach,
 and pray, and wrought all his
 works, an *unclean Spirit*; when in
 their ordinary language they in-
 voke their damnation, and set their
 mouths against the Heavens; and
 the Spirit, and Holinesse, and
 Saints, becomes their by-word
 and their song, and entitle Satan
 to all the glorious works of Christ
 in Conversion, and call it all *Delusi-*

on and *Fanaticism*; when they oppress, persecute, (and worse) the Saints and Servants of the Lord, filling Prisons with them; when they set themselves in the Throne of the Lord, and will be Lords in the Conscience, and make the Sons of *Zion* as the filth of the Earth; and all this after the Lord hath been pleading his Controversie with them, in very stupendious Dispensations; and by their hour of prosperity they are but hardened in their way, and say they are delivered to all their abominations; that is certainly a *Generation of God's wrath*. Now among such a generation the Lord calls his people to retirement (into their Chambers) till his wrath come upon the wicked to the utmost, and he wil put in his sickle, & reap down their abominations, and none shall save them.

4. The Lord calls to retirement, that they may deal with him by faith and prayer, in their secret corners, and may wait for his teachings, &c. as may further be opened in the close of this Discourse.

And thus we have endeavoured to cleare the point, That Jesus Christ calls his Followers from off the publike Stage, into a more retired condition; *when*, and *why* he doth it. I shall come to some useful conclusions, and so answer the objections and dissatisfactions of any that lye against it.

1. If Jesus Christ doth sometimes in his providential Dispensations, call off his people to retirement, & puts them as into the holes of the Rock, then it wil follow that one Dispensation calls for that wch another doth not; the Lord calls for that at one time, wch he doth not at another;

another; sometimes to a more open appearing in their publike services and actings for him; and administrations of worship and prophesying, sometimes to a more open exposing to sufferings; and at another time the Word of the Lord is, *Enter-into thy Chambers, &c.* shut thy doors about thee. So what hath been a duty for Saints in one day, hath not been so expressly (I mean the main generation of them) a duty at another; especially in the later dispensations of the Lord towards the giving up of the Kingdom of the Beast, when the Lords controversion is now, and of his Kingdome, hath been with a high hand carrying on, as hath been shewed; In such a day the Lamb marcheth against his Enemies, and then *re.reats*, and sounds a Retreat to his called Ones; sometimes he faceth the beast, and then withdraws, and drinks of the Brook in the way; he coucheth like a Lyon, and then anon *riseth up* to pursue

E

sue

sue the prey : Here is the wisdom of the Saints, here is following the Lamb; this is to see his footsteps, to walk after them.

2. Let it be therefore for an *humble enquiry* at least, to all that are sober, to weigh what hath been hinted, and to consider if this be not *the Word of the Lord* at this day, whether Jesus Christ hath not founded a retreat, whether he doth not call off from *publike Prophesying*, and more *publike Administrations*, (though the wickedness of men be instrumentally in it) yea whether the *Testimony* be not *slain* and *lies dead*; and that all the Characters of it have a visible accomplishment at this day, a *Testimony* finished, *Rev. 11.7.* to all the *Offices* of Jesus Christ, and of his *Kingdom* in the world; in all the concernments of it, and against the whole *Mysterie* of Iniquity, and of the *Kingdom* of the Beast, and that especially in this part of the world where the Spirit is given forth.

And

And when we had been looking for the fulfilling hereof, to a *Death* upon the whole, and the Witnesses lye as dead in all the parts of the world, let the place be named where an open testimony against all the abominations of the Beast, against all their National wickednesses, and a testimony for the Lord Jesus in the whole of his Kingdom, as King of Saints and Nations will be born; though some Gospel truths will be born, and are practised among them: Yea, what a strange *healing up* hath there been in all the Nations of *Europe*, among all the ten horns, a *General Peace* in the Kingdom of the Beast, not a Horn or Nation that wars against Babylon; not a hand lifted up against her in a way of War, to hate her, and make her desolate; but all preparations from the North and the West, hushed up, levelled, and laid dead, when a few years since the Nations were all in a flame, as if the *last distress* had

E 2

been

been upon them: But lo a *healing* up, a *stillness*, and the proud Whore sits as a Queen, glorifying her self that she shall see no sorrow; (which she feared before) and shall not be a *Widow*, nor be made *desolate*. Which healing & Peace among the horns, is implied in *their sending gifts* (by their Embassadors) *one to another*. Rev. i i. 10. because the *People* and *Spirit* which they most feared, is *laid dead*; the prophesying of ruine to the hastening up on the Beast, and wrath upon the Nations, seems to have been but a fancy; and to come to nought; for behold, their prayers, witnessings, prophesyings, Armies; every where in the *whole street* of the City are come to nought. Is not this the triumph of the Nations at this day; and of the Beast?

Such as state the last slaughter of the witnesses to be already past, namely about the year 1558. when that general blow was given to the Protestant

stant Interest in *Germany*, and other Nations, and by the *Marian* Persecution in this Nation, have sufficient confutation by what hath since fallen out in several Nations, in the persecuting and slaying of the Witnesses in *Poland, France, Ireland, &c.* of late years; and the death that the whole Work of Christ is under at this day, it being clear, that when the last slaughter is past, and the lying dead three days and an half is over, in the Witnesses resurrection, that then they ascend into Heaven, into a state of *Liberty, Power and Glory*, from which they fall no more; but the *seventh Angel* sounds, and the *third Wo* cometh upon the World (the last Plagues to be executed upon the Antichristian World, and *Voices are heard in Heaven* (amongst the Churches) proclaiming the Lord Jesus *King of Nations*; for that upon the resurrection of the Witnesses, and sounding of the *seventh Angel*, the Lord Jesus comes forth

forth to take to himself his great Power,
 and to reign, to contest with the Horns
 about his Sovereignty, to rule the Na-
 tions with a Rod of Iron, breaking
 them in pieces as a Potters Vessel, at
 which time (as some eminent Witnesses
 of the Lord have well stated it) *The*
little Stone, cut out without hands (the
 separated Saints in the Nations) be-
 gins in a more especial manner to
smite the Image, Dan. 2. 39. (for the
 Stone begins to smite upon the feet of
 the Image, the last part of the Roman
 Monarchy, which toes upon the feet
ver. 41. are the same with the ten
 Horns, as *Dan. 7.* And the Stone smiting
breaking in pieces, & consuming the King-
doms (as the Spirit of God opens the
 meaning of the Stone, and its smiting,
v. 44.) *And in the dayes of these Kings,*
shall the God of Heaven set up a King-
dom (the Kingdom of the Stone)
which shall never be destroyed, and the
Kingdom shall not be left to oth^r people,
but it shall break in pieces, and consume
 all

all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever) is interpreted further in the Vision that *Daniel* himself had of the same thing, ch. 7. 22. 26 *When Judgement is given to the Saints of the Most High; And ver. 26. The Judgement shall sit (the Saints judging the ten-horned Beast and his Kingdom) and they shall take away his Dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end.* But I do but hint here, what I may give a further account of in due time, to remove the stumbling-blocks that lie in the way of many of the Lord's People as to this glorious truth.

But I return to my enquiry, which is, that I humbly judge that the last slaying of the Witnesses was not about the time mentioned, for the reasons hinted (and others might be given) but rather, that great, sore blow upon the Protestant Interest, to be fixed upon that foot of account, namely, of *the Beast making war with the Saints, and overcoming them, Rev. 13. 7. which*

War from the time of the *waldensian* people he hath been carrying on, and *overcame them*: And so in *Bohemia, Germany, &c.* upon which Word are all the former Wars and Victories of the Beast to be stated, and not in reference to the last slaughter, when the *Beast makes war with the Witnesses, and kills them, and overcomes them*; which is after a full testimony hath been finished to all the Offices, *Work* and *Kingdom* of our Lord Jesus, and then the Beast (such as are in the Spirit of the Beast, and influenced by him) rise up (by the wise and holy permission and ordering of the Lord to bring about his own glorious design) and *slay the Testimony*, lay it dead (especially in a civil sence) in that tenth part of the City where the *killing* most eminent-ly is (which is, where the most eminent Testimony for the Kingdom of Christ is the Spirit, hath been of any of the Nations) and so all *publike prophesying*, in an ordinary way, and with

an allowed liberty becomes cut off, & the publike assembling of Churches suppress'd, in that tenth part of the City, so that the Work & Kingdom of Jesus Christ being likely to arise a few years since in the apprehension of most of the Saints, and to the terror of the Nations, lo it is laid dead; & say the sons of *Babylon*, we wil so bury it that it shall rise no more, though that will be found their great error.

I might instance the Judgement of several ancient & holy WITNESSES of Christ, who are now in the same apprehension as to this dispensation we are under, & of some who in the highest day of our prosperity a few years since, spake of it as to come upon us; & also (as is humbly judg'd by some worthy servants of the Lord at this day, that a more then ordinary discovery & revelation hath been given forth to a worthy Minister of Christ, & some others, that this is the 3. days & a half in w^{ch} the witnesses are to lie dead, w^{ch} I think meet only to hint at this time.

But

But if so, then the Word of the Lord is, *Go and dye*, as to ordinary, publike Prophelying; and 'tis the wisdom of the Saints to submit to the Dispensation of God, and to be content even to lye as dead men, in a civil sence, till the spirit of life from God enter, and a voice be heard in the providential workings of the Lord, *Come up hither*, Rev. 11, 12. And let it be soberly considered whether the contrary practice be not to cross the very design of the Lord at this day, and to ruine the Churches and whole Interest of Jesus Christ, whose *resurrection* and *restoration* we are patiently to wait for.

Yea, (whether this be the last slaying or not) 'tis worthy a serious Judgement to consider, That in the several Ages of Persecucion from the Apostles dayes (unless where some have been carried forth by an extraordinary impulse of Spirit) the Professors and Churches of Christ met together

together in such a way as might most probably tend to their preservation; in a private and retired way, in the best Wildom they could; as the Disciples, *John* 20.19. they were assembled in an *upper Room* for fear of the Jews: And the Church of *Hierusalem* scattered abroad in parties in the several Provinces upon the Persecution, *Acts* 8. when they began to be haled to prison from their Meetings; and those that remained, kept in a private way, *Acts* 12. And so we find the Christians assembling secretly, & by night, as they had opportunity: As that Congregation that continued together in *Q. Mary's* dayes in *London*, and kept up their Meetings secretly, and were wonderfully preserved in that day; though (as I may presently shew) 'tis hard to give out any general, absolute Rule in this case: But 'tis certain, this was their ordinary practice: The reasons hereof have been spoken to. It may further be added, that in
such

such a retired way, they shall not so much dare and provoke the civil Magistrate to greater wrath against them, and not lay a stumbling block in their way, but seem more to walk in the meekness of Jesus Christ; and 'tis the liberty that Jesus Christ doth indulge them, and answers his promise of preserving, and being a Sanctuary to a holy Seed from one generation to another, and not to be exposed to the bloodthirstiness and rage of their persecutors, though still honoring himself by the suffering of some.

And as this hath been the practise of the Churches of Christ in times of persecution, so of particular Ministers and Witnesses of the Lord in all ages, namely, as they were led by the spirit of the Lord to retire from particular persecution, especially when their case was different from the rest of the saints as in some ages it hath bin; the first blow was at the Ministers of Christ; so Moses fled before the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt

dwelt in the Land of *Midean* till the time of deliverance came to the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, *Exod.* 2. 15.

So *David* from the persecution of *Saul*, who retired into the Wilderness, where the Lord hid him, till the time that the promise should be fulfilled in his reign over *Israel*, 1 *Sam.* 19. 18. though in his retirement he was deprived of the Institutions of the Worship of God in the temple, as he complains in several *Psalms*,

Elijah had given an eminent Testimony against *Ahab*, and the abominations of that day, and prophesied the wrath of God to come upon *Israel*. But when he knew the mischief that *Ahab* intended, and he had finished his Testimony, the Lord commands him to go, and hide himself, 1 *Kings* 17. 2. & 8. and Chap. 10. 10. And we know *Elijah* was an eminent Type of the Witnesses of *Jesus Christ* under the New-Testament *Babylon*; though in the third year when it should rain again: according to the word of the Lord (which made way for *Elijah's* appearance) he shewed himself to *Ahab*, and God was with him to deliver him: But when *Jezebel* sought after him again, ch. 19. he went into the Wilderness, and hid himself in a Cave, v. 9.

Ac

At the same time before the three years were finished, and the Persecution by Jezebel continued against all the Lords Prophets, 1 *King*. 18. *Obadiab* hid the Prophets by 50. in a Cave, who at other times were publicly prophesying.

So when the King had sent out a Warrant and Officers to take *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, *Jer*. 36. 26. 'tis said, *The Lord HID them*; which implied their own retirement at that time.

So our Lord Jesus himself, when he heard that *John* was cast into Prison, he retired into *Galilee*, *Matth*. 4. 12. And when he further heard that he was *beheaded*, he withdrew into a desert place, *Mat*. 14. 13. And so when the Jews sought to kill him, &c. till his hour was come; which places are ordinarily urged by interpreters upon them for the case in hand.

So our Lord Jesus allows his Disciples, *Matth*. 10. when he sent them forth as sheep among wolves, ver. 16. that

that they should *then be wise as Serpents*, walk with such a wisdom as becomes sheep among Wolves, which is not rashly to put themselves into the mouth of the Wolf. And ver. 17. bids them *beware of men*; and then, *being persecuted into one City, to fly unto another*, v. 23. the scope of that word being to direct them, that when Rulers by their Edicts will not suffer them to preach in one place, they might go to another; if not in public, then in private, and from House to House, as the providence of God should lead them.

When the Jews sought for *Paul* at *Damascus*, the Disciples did not press him to expose himself to be delivered up into their hands, in appearing openly there, but on the contrary, at a hard rate conveyed him away, Acts 9. 23. 2 Cor. 11. 32. *In Damascus, the Governor under Artas the King, kept the City with a Garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a Window in a Basket*

basket was I let down by the wall, I escaped
 his hands: which the Apostle there
 sets down among his persecutions;
 when the Governor of the City would
 have apprended him, he thought good,
 and the Saints with him so judged, to
 withdraw, and yet he was not judged
 unfaithful, or fearful in so doing. So
Acts 14. when Paul and Barnabas had
 spoken boldly in the Lord, for a time at
Iconium, when they understood that
 the Jews and Gentiles with them
 made an assault, (at their meeting)
 to use them despihtfully, and to stone
 them, they were ware of it, (they thought
 it ground enough that they were ware
 of it) and so fled into the next Pro-
 vince into *Lystra*. When the Jews
 laid wait for him, *Act. 20. 3.* he went
 not into Syria, but returned thorow
Macedonia. And when the Jews had
 gathered a company of lewd fellows to
 assault the meeting at Jasons house, Paul
 and Sylvus withdrew, *Act. 17. 5, 6.* for,
 they found them no, ver. 6. And at Berea,
 the

the Brethren sent away Paul, ver. 14.

So when he would have hazarded himself, the Disciples suffered him not, *Act. 19, 30.* And when he would go up to Jerusalem, all the Saints besought him not to go (judging in an ordinary way he ought not,) till they understood that Paul was under an extraordinary impulse of Spirit to go, and then they ceased.

The case of those famous Ministers and witnesses of Christ at the beginning of *Q. Maries* persecution, who preached not after the Queens Inhibition and Proclamation, though it were not a binding Law, as appears by the Declaration of their Faith they gave forth when prisoners in the Kings Bench, in which they thus express themselves; ' We are not here in prisons as Traitors, or seditious persons, or transgressors of any Laws of this Realm; Inhibitions, Proclamations, or Commandments of the Queens Highness, or of any of

See Book
of Mart.

the Councils, God's Name be prai-
 sed therefore, &c. Subscribed by Dr.
Taylor, Philpot, Bradford, Hooper, Ro-
gers, Saunders, &c. the most eminent
 Ministers and Martyrs of that day;
 who it appears preached not publick-
 ly after the Proclamation and Act of
 Parliament, but were committed, as
 having been men famous in King *Ed-*
wards days, and had preached to warn
 the people against Popery, in the in-
 terval, before the Proclamation was
 published, and were taken after, and
 were put to death because they would
 not deny the Truth they had formerly
 preached; which the servants of Christ
 at this day hope (through grace) they
 shal not do, if called to a tryal there-
 of; and how far several of the ser-
 vants of the Lord have exposed them-
 selves, notwithstanding a former Pro-
 clamations, and the latter Act of Par-
 liament, and particular charges that
 way lye against some of them, sober
 Christians may judge, and not passion-
 nately

nately censure any of them; and the due consideration thereof, and of what hath been said in this case; may be more then enough to remove their prejudice, or mistakes herein.

So that here is both precept, and multiplied examples both of the Old and New Testament, of the Prophets and Apostles, and the ordinary Ministers of Christ, that when particular and personal persecution hath been against them, a design to apprehend them, and a lying in wait for them, they have at such a time withdrawn, and retired themselves from their more publick Ministry.

In the ordinary providence of God, these Reasons of it may be instanced:

i. When publick Preachers are sent to preach to the world, and the people will not receive them, but persecute them, they, after some patient waiting, may withdraw *for a testimony against them*, Mat. 10. 14. which is too

often the case of the servants of **Christ**, though it doth not fully reach the case in hand:

2. When the Lord *Jesus hath more work and service for his servants*, , and will preserve them to a day of liberty (as hath been shewed of the whole generation of Saints) then he hath used to hide them by his gracious providence in a wonderful manner, and hath called them off from the publick stage, and kept them in the midst of the persecutions they have been under, or snatched them out of them, as abundant instances might be given; so it is prophesied, *Isa. 30. 20 That their teachers should be removed into corners*, till the Captivity was over, &c.

3. *In mercy to the Churches*, that the liberties and lives of the servants of **Christ** may be preserved, to serve them more publickly when the Lord by his
provi-

providence shal make way ; and in the mean time may be useful to the Churches in a more private way ; and not to spend them (in a kind of passionate courage) upon the implacable fury of their persecutors : whence it was, that the Disciples at *Cesarea* so passionately besought *Paul* not to go up to *Hierusalem* ; And when he would have entered in among the people , the Disciples *suffered him not*.

This may suffice to state and clear this case to the consciences of such as may be differently minded nerein , which may at least call for a mutual forbearance in love , and that Satan get not an advantage to stir up heats , heighten prejudices , beget a greater distance among the people of God ; and so in stead of closing , widen the sad breaches , that have been amongst us.

E 3

And

And yet when I have thus stated this case, that the call of Jesus Christ may be to *retire*; and that 'tis lawful upon particular personal persecution, for the Ministers of Christ to do so; yet I also say with blessed *Bucer*, as he states this case on the 4th. of *Matth.* upon our Saviour's retirement, That there can be no absolute, binding, unlimited Rule laid down in this case, that shall be binding in all times, and to all persons. And 'tis hard for others to determine when a servant of Christ may more honour the Lord by retirement, or by a publike exposing himself. Every man in such a case is to give up himself to the leading of the Spirit of the Lord, which hath carried some of the servants of Christ in one way, and some in another, in all times of persecution accordingly, as Christ will be glorified by them. Though the same *Bucer* (who also retired in the *Germane* persecution) concludes thus: *Where by retirement & flight thou mayest*

‘ mayest see an advantage of honoring
 ‘ Christ (*tue te hora seruans*) by with-
 ‘ drawing thou dost as Christ himself
 ‘ did, and as *Paul* at *Damascus*.

Yet that the minds of Saints may
 be fully satisfied herein, I will consider
 what is usually urged by some to the
 contrary.

Obj. How do the servants of the
 Lord give forth a full *Testimony*, if they
 retire when Edicts are given forth
 against them, seeing 'tis said they
 overcome by the *Word* of their *Testimo-*
ny, *Rev. 12*. That we may therefore
 consider how far this may reach, and
 when Saints may be said to keep
 the *Commandments* of God, and to
 have the *Testimony* of *Iesus Christ*, ver.
 last.

1. A *Testimony* is given first by
 the Preachers & Witnesses of Christ,
 by discovering the sins and the Anti-
 christian abominations of the age &
 day they live in, and witnessing for all
 the Offices, Worship; Kingdom of
 F 4 Jesus

Jesus Christ, according to the Scripture, as the Spirit of the Lord gives light, and acts them thereunto; and as the Providence of God opens a door to them: Blessed be the Father of Spirits, that through the Grace and Power of the Lord Jesus such a *Testimony* hath been given forth; to the glory of God, the conviction and establishment (as is hoped) of the people of God, which testimony, no doubt, the Lord will make good in his best time; and which they leave with God, being satisfied they are *called* by the providence of God to a more *retired* way.

2. *All other Saints* do keep the Testimony of Jesus (and the Commandments of God as opposed to the Commands of men in the matters of Christ and his Worship) when they are (through the teaching of the Spirit in the Word, and the Power of the same Spirit resting upon them) kept from *partaking of the sins*, pollutions, and

Anti-

christian abominations of false Wor-
ship which men would impose upon
them, *Acts 2. 40.* Save your selves
from this ungodly generation, *Eph. 5:*
7. Be not ye therefore partakers with
them, *v. 11.* Have no fellowship with the
unfruitful works of darkness, &c. Touch
not the unclean thing, be ye separate,
2. Cor. 6. Come out of her my people,
that ye be not partakers of her sins, that
ye receive not of her plagues, *Rev.*
18. 4.

When the professing people shall
obey the Lord in such words as these,
and not defile themselves, nor pro-
voke the Lord to jealousy against
them, this is a good Testimony, and
such Saints who call for extremities
from others, may find this to be a
Testimony hard enough to be kept,
when they are tryed, *as they have in
lesser matters already.*

This

This Testimony the 7000. kept in *Samarita*, that bowed not their knee to *Baal*, and God accepted them in it, And let all the Ministers of Christ who would approve themselves as such, to God and his people; take heed that they are faithful in this testimony (as well as others of the people of God) and that under pretence of having the liberty of their Ministry, they are not found in compliance with Humane Inventions, against light, to render themselves a scorn to the prophane, and a grief and stumbling block to the godly, especially when such eminent and severe strokes from Heaven have been upon many for so doing.

3. Saints do keep the Testimony of *Jesus Christ* when they are found in the practice of Christ's appointments, though in a more private way, which is a testimony against the persecutions of the World, and the abominations thereof, as the primitive Christians practised.

4. Saints

4. Saints do keep the word of Testimony when any of them are called before men, for not partaking in false ways of Worship, and being so called, do not deny the truth, but confess it before man, *Mat. 10. 32, 33.* *Who soever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven; But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* So 'tis said, *Iesus Christ witnessed a good Confession before Pontius Pilate,* *1 Tim 6* Though in this case also, 'tis not easie to lay down the utmost extent of duty; sometimes the Witnesses of Christ have freely and openly, upon their convention and examination, without any proof against them, witnessed to the whole truth and matter of Fact, as carried forth, 'tis to be charitably judged by the Spirit of the Lord thereto, as in *Stephens* case, and *Peter's Acts 3.*

Others

Others have kept silence ; and held their persecutors to proof of matter of Fact against them ; yet so as they would not *deny the Truth*, which is a *Testimony* to it. Now such a witness-bearing before the Judicatories of men, as the Spirit of the Lord carries forth our spirits, is another way of *having the Testimony of Jesus Christ*.

Now if the Lord help this generation of his people to be faithful to their Light in these particulars, they shall be found the Lambs followers, keeping the **Commandments of God** and the *Testimony of Jesus*.

But for any to judge, that nothing else is a finishing a faithful testimony, (but for the servants of Christ to put themselves into the mouths of those whom they know wait to devour them, and have laid a snare for them, and

and that such are unfaithful, or fearful, or worse, that think it not their duty; certainly when good souls are come to themselves, and shall particularly know and weigh the cases of the Lord's poor servants, (without which 'tis unreasonable to judge) we shall all have a tender hearted forbearance one of another, as that case requires.

Obj. 2. But was not this the practice of the Apostles, *Acts 4.* when *commanded* not to preach any more in the Name of the Lord Jesus, they answered, *They ought to obey God rather than men.*

Ans. 1. I humbly conceive, that the servants of God at this day if they were in the like manner called before Magistrates, and were charged by them, as the Apostles were, namely, *Not to preach at all, nor to teach in the Name of Jesus* (for so it was, they would answer

answer as the Apostles did, & would continue preaching, where the providence of God opened a way to them, as they did.

2: We do not find it express that *Peter* and *John* preached openly in the *Temple* after that, though they witnessed and preached elsewhere, until the Angel of the Lord opened the Prison doors, and commanded them to go and *Speak in the Temple*, Acts 5.

3. The Apostles having an extraordinary Anointing, were to witness to all Nations that they had seen the Lord, and that he was risen from the dead; which is not the case of every particular Minister; They went and preach't by the special dictate of the holy Spirit in one place, and not in another; 'tis not so with ordinary Preachers: And the same Spirit that led them forth sometimes to expose themselves to hazards, at another time led them to withdraw from danger, as hath been shewed. Besides, it doth

doth not appear that there was any more than a *meer prohibition* not to preach, to *Peter* and *John*, by the Council of the *Jews*, without any penalty of imprisonment or banishment expressed.

3. *Obj.* Is not there a strict command, that the Professors of Christ should *not forsake the assembling themselves together*; *Heb. 10.*

Ans. Let it be considered what forsaking of assembling this was; It was the departing from all Christian worship and fellowship; a casting off their profession, as *ver. 23.* *Let us hold fast our profession*: such a forsaking, as was a leading to an Apostacy, as is clear in the following verses; *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, &c.* which is annexed as a reason of not forsaking their assembling, this will not be judged the present case.

2. Saints therefore do not forsake their assembling, in that sense while they

they hold fast their profession; and labour to keep up worship in a more private way, where they may likely assemble more peaceably, and with less distraction; for so those Hebrews did, and all the Churches, as hath been shewed.

Meeting is a duty; but meeting openly is an accidental thing.

4. *Obj.* But how are the servants of Christ *consistent* to their own Doctrine, who press others to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, and would prepare them for it; when they do not expose themselves to the utmost.

Ans. There may be a prodigal casting away of liberty or life; as well as a giving them up upon the Call of God; 'Tis certain, that 'tis a duty to offer up every Isaac to the Lord when he Calls for it, but we must see our Call to be clear: we should through grace be ready rather to suffer the loss of all things, then to deny the truth, and to follow

follow, the providential leadings of God thereto: But that is our duty and call from the Lord to continue *publikely witnessing*, and to *expose* our selves to the utmost hazards, rather then give place; though we know the snare is laid for us, and we in all likelihood put an end to our Work in so doing, is not yet proved to our Consciences from any Word of God; but indeed the contrary is cleare to them.

If it be said, that the Judgement of some Saints is a *Call* herein; I answer, That the Judgement of many more may be put in the ballance against them, who judge otherwise; which may have as great, or it may be a greater weight with them.

Obj. 5. But did not *Daniel* worship openly notwithstanding the Decree, *Dan. 6.*

Ans. Whatever is said to the contrary,

etary, it will easily appear that the prohibition and Decree was, that *Daniel should not pray unto his God at all*, as v. 7. *That whosoever shall ask a Petition of any God or man for thirty dayes, save of thee Oh King, &c.* Not that *Daniel* and the *Jews* should not pray towards *Jerusalem*: So that the Decree concerned natural moral Worship, and not positive instituted Worship, which may sometimes be dispensed with.

2. *Daniel* in this case had an extraordinary Anointing upon him, as a Prophet, which carried him forth in this particular, which in every circumstance is not to be made a standing Rule: Besides, we do not hear of such an open appearing of the rest of the people of God then in *Babylon*.

And let it be seriously considered, that sometimes God hath indulged his people in the matter of positive Institutions; as the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, who were obliged to sacrificing, if they could have had liberty; but we do not find it practised while they were in *Egypt*:

So

So of Circumcision in the WilderNESS there was an indulgence of it; and *that rolling away the reproach of Egypt*, mentioned at their circumcision; *Josb. 5. 9.* was not the reproach (as some learned Interpreters judge) of not being circumcised, but of not being brought for so many years, into the promised Land, which 'tis like the *Egyptians* reproached *Israel* with. So the Building of the Temple (which was Institution) ceased, *Ezra 4.* last. upon the prohibition till the 2^{d.} year of *Darius*, whose indulgence they might have soon had, but neglected it, and built their own houses, and were reprov'd by the Prophets for their neglect therein.

And that word (as urged by blessed Mr. *Burroughs* in this case, and other of the Servants of Christ) is not to be slighted, *Mal. 9. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*, which may wel hold forth this, That the Lord hath more respect to a Work of Mercy, than to a Sa-

crifice ; a lawful preservation of a man's self is a moral duty ; a work of mercy not only to himself, but others ; to which end a Sacrifice of instituted Worship at certain times, and in some cases may be omitted.

Obj. 6. But 'tis objected , That the case is not the same with that of our Saviour and the Apostles, whose lives were in hazard ; but now it is not so, the Liberties and Livelyhoods of the Ministers of Christ are onely endangered.

Ans. 1. The loss of liberty & livelyhood, with the ruine of their Families, is as a *lesser death*, the preservation of which is a moral duty.

But, let the case well be considered, what three Months Imprisonment in such nasty holes as the *London* Prisons are , and it may be understood to amount to little less than life ; and upon what terms liberty may be had at the three Months end , is not so easie to

determine; it cost one eminent * Minister his life already. But if it be stated to be onely the loss of liberty, it will be a tender case of Conscience, whether for once or twice appearing in publike, a Minister is to hazard his service of the Churches and People of God, to whom he may be useful in a more private way.

Obj. 7. But such a withdrawing may be an offence to some Saints, though most others be satisfied.

Ans. I shall here speak a little to the case of offences; because Satan hath formerly had great advantage upon the Spirits of the Lord's people this way.

1. There are offences that com by the ungodly, persecuting world, who lay stumbling blocks in the way of the people of God by their persecuting them; to such it is said, *Wo to the world because of offences*, Mat. 18. Saints are not surely to pronounce those woes one upon another upon different apprehensions of duty.

G 3

2. There

2. There are offences that arise among the Churches and people of God themselves; such are,

1. Either *really* given one to another. Or

2^{dly}, Through *misunderstanding, weakness, passion or temptation*, are unduly taken, and not given.

1. Concerning the former, namely, *offences really given* (which will too often be, while we live but in *part*, and are *help* but in part) the Spirit of God calls for all *forbearance, compassion* and *restoring* one another, and bearing one anothers burdens, according to the Royal Law of Love, *Gal. 6.1, 2. Eph. 4. Phl. 2. Col. 3. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 8.* from which Scriptures let Saints and Members of Churches learn what Spirit and carriage is required one of another in case of offences; which through miscarriages, mistakes and hours of temptations, will befall the poor children of God while they are in the flesh, and therefore do call for
such

such an exercise of grace one towards another; and not for rigid censuring, debasing, treading one anothers names under their feet (or worse) if it may be) which are fruits of the flesh, and of the pride of our own hearts, when we set up a Throne in our own spirits, and all must bow and fall down to it, to be judged either as to matter of Judgement or Practise, and wonderfully please our selves in it, which will not well consist with a well humbled heart.

2. There are Offences upon the Spirits of Saints, that are *taken*, but not *really given*, through weakness of Judgement, mis-guided Zeale, Rashness and Passions, and not attending to a well studied and rightly informed Judgement; whereby the Tempter waits to stumble good souls, and to hinder their peace and communion with the Lord.

Hence, the Wisdom of God takes special notice of the evils that befall the spirits of men in this case; *A Brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong City, and their contentions are like the bars of a Castle, Prov, 18. 19.*

Yea, let it be seriously attended to by all that fear the Lord, whether all the Teachers that have been among the People of God, have not risen either for want of a compassionate bearing of offences given, or by taking offences unduly, when not really given, and by which Satan hath been glorified, and the unconverted world hath been stumbled; and all for want of thorough-heart humiliation, Wisdom, Love in the Spirit, whereby they should be able to judge soberly, and walk in peace, as becometh Saints.

But oftentimes this temptation hath

hath not rested here, but as it hath been observed by holy men, that all backsliding and apostacy begins in taking offence, first offended at one thing or person, then at another; and so at more, till they drink in prejudice against the Servants of the Lord, and the Way they walk in; fall from all sound and searching Ministry, and so run from Mountain to Hill, from one thing to another, till they come to nothing, unless the Lord in rich grace recover them by a sound Work of Humiliation upon them. 'Tis said in that Parable *Matthew 13. 12.* That he *that hath not* *not* *in himself in time of persecution, is* *offended.* Various wayes hath Satan to offend and tumble them: Our Lord Jesus warned his Disciples of this, *Matth. 26. 31.* Then saith Jesus unto them, *All ye shall be offended because of me this Night, &c.*

And

And when the Lord promiset^h to bring back the Captivity of his people, he saith to his servants, *Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare ye the way; take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people;* Then will the Lord remove their offences, and heal their spirits, and they shal walk on in the way to Zion, and shall not stumble any more.

Obj. 8. But doth it not proceed from carnal fear in such, as judge that retirement is the duty of this day.

Ans. A grain more of love may cast it, that the Lord's servants, and such of the Churches that so judge and walk, do walk after their light, conviction, and satisfaction of conscience, which happily a little time may determine.

Truly most of the sons of men have an *Aboloms* spirit, and say in our hearts, What would I do, if I were in such, or such an ones case? wherein our own hearts wonderfully deceive

us

us, Yet if any of the servants of the Lord have a more then ordinary impulse of spirit at this time, (as it may be some have had, since this dispensation of giving in their testimony) 'tis best to leave them to the Lord, without judging each other.

Concerning the Ministers of Christ, I would humbly say thus much; That if they shal be found in their particular practice faithful to the light and testimony they have given forth, through the same grace upon them, and chule the greatest of sufferings rather then defile themselves, and continue edifying of the Saints and Churches of God in a more private way, as they have opportunity, I humbly judgethey shal be accepted with the Lord as his faithful witnesses, and be justified in the consciences of all serious people; especially when the issue of this dispensation shall be made manifest.

And

And thus have we stated this case, we hope, according to Scripture light, and leave it with the Lord, to make it a blessing to any of his.

But what doth the Lord call for, *by way of duty*, of all his people in a time of *retirements*.

I. *To speak often one to another*, Mal. 3. It was a time when there was hardly a Priest to speak publickly to them, but such as corrupted the worship of the Lord: Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. They had great thoughts of heart for the Name of their God, and they spake, no doubt, of his dispensation, and of the signs of the times, and what he call'd for, to strengthen, settle, and comfort one another

another; this is the practice Saints should be serious and conscientious, and often in, in such a day, and so keep up the practice of Ordinances among them.

2. To bee found as the *mourners of Zion*: In the day of *Zions* breach and Captivity, the promise of mercy runs to her *mourners*, to the *humble* and *contrite* ones, *Isa. 57. 15. & 18.* with those hee will dwell, those hee will *revive* and *heal*. Hee will not contend always; lest their spirit fail; but will restore comfort to the *mourners*. So *Isaiah* Chap. 61. ver. 2, 3. And Chapter 66: vers. 10. This was *Jeremiahs* spirit; In that day, *Jeremiah* 14. ver. 17. let mine eyes run down with tears, and let them not cease; for the *Virgins Daughter of my people* is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

Oh

Oh that the Lord would give down this Spirit upon his people ; as we would call for a Spirit of Bravery and Courage, which in its season is honorable ; and hath appeared upon many of the Ministers of Christ) so let us call upon one another for this Spirit also, to be found mourning apart, and together in our retirements, for the abominations and blasphemies of the land, for our former unprofitableness, unholiness, security, formality, hypocrisie, pride of life, divisions, frowardness, backslidings, breach of Vows and Covenants with the Lord, self-seekings in the management of the precious cause of the Lord Jesus, which now lieth as crucified : Oh! dowe mourn over it, as well as talk of it?

3. Jesus Christ calls to *heart-searching* : In such a day is every one to be *retiring into their own hearts*, and finding out the plague of them, *Lam. 3. 40.* In the day of their captivity,

vity, then saith the Prophet, *let us search and try our ways, &c.*

Then is every one to be awakening his own heart; every soul attending to a renewed repentance and humility, to renewed mortification in the spirit, that it may be as *a day of a new conversion* upon all our spirits.

4. In such a day; Jesus Christ calls *his to uniting*, that we get all our prejudices to be removed and healed, though under different measures of light; as we are upon the enquiry of our *way to Zion* (after the long night of Antichristian darkness) we have many stones in our way, and much remaining darkness upon our spirits, and the Lord gives out light gradually to his people in the Churches restoration, which calls for a mutual forbearance from all, that would see the *beauty of Zion*, and press after it, and not imposing

posing one upon another, much less devouring one another, by the way. Ah! when our spirits are more melted by the Gospel, and we are more in the spirit of the Gospel, it shall be so; then shall we know one another as Saints, and upon that account have Communion together, and not be bound up to any Form, and make it a Law of Communion, which is indeed no better then a dreg of Antichristianism upon our spirits. Union with the Lord Jesus is the ground of fellowship with him, and to it should be one with another, 1 *Joh.* i. 3. Let us all contend together for the great interest of the Gospel; power of Godliness, purity of Worship, as the great and common interest of all that fear the Lord.

5. In retiring times the Lord calls to much *secret duty*, especially of prayer; *Cant.* 2. 14. *Oh my Dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, &c.* Jesus Christ beholds

behold his Dove in the clefts of the Rock in her retirement) as hid from the wrath of her Enemies) and there she mourns in a Dove-like spirit, and the Lord delights to see her face, and hear her voice.

Some have more fully heard what great things *single Saints* have done in prayer for the people of God ; how they have prevailed with God, as *Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, &c.* in their several generations, who were men of like passions with us: *Let me alone*, saith the Lord to one *Moses*. Every praying soul should be so awakened and engaged in this Work at this day, as if the whole lay upon his, or her shoulders; as if his cries (even alone) were to prevail for *Zion's* deliverance.

Oh my dear Companions in the Kingdome and Patience of *Jesus Christ*, cry mightily, and sigh with bitterness and unutterable groans,

H

pour

pour out your souls as water before the Lord, because of the sinne and breach of the people of your God; Oh cry for *Healing* for *Zion*; cry for your Bread, those precious Gospel-feedings of which you are bereft; cry against *Babylon*, and the Horns that are pouring out the blood of your Brethren: Cry for the ruine of the Beasts Kingdom, and the exaltation of the Throne of Jesus Christ in the world.

'Tis said *Dan. 7. 13.* *One like the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Dayes, and they brought him near before him. Saints by Faith and Prayer do bring the Son of Man near before the Father; And then there was given him Dominion, Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages should serve him,* ver. 14.

If such a Spirit be given forth in the entering into our Chambers, verily the wind thereof shall put such an *Earthquake* into the tenth part of the City, and the Foundations that are now laying
that

that it shall be like a breach, ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. Isa. 30 13, 14. And the Adversaries of the Lord shall not see whence their blow cometh. Certainly never did such a praying generation miscarry.

6. In retiring times the People of God should *walk wisely*, at such a time when a man is made an *offender for a word*: Let us all labour to do all in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, in our walking towards the World, in our assembling, in our particular walkings, in our *silence* and in our *speaking*, lest not onely themselves, but their Brethren also suffer by their weakness and folly: *who so walketh wisely, shall be delivered*, Prov. 28.26.

7. In retiring times Jesus Christ calls for bowels towards the afflictions and necessities of Brethren; this is a special duty of the day; some thou-

sands of Families are bereft of their bread, while the Lord hath spared to others a full portion, not onely in mercy to themselves, but to be a blessing to their distressed Brethren: Blessed be the Lord for what he hath done upon the spirit of his servants in this thing already; As the distress will encrease, so should the hearts and bowels of such in whose hand it is, be enlarged, else let not them think to partake of the day of mercy, if they shew no mercy to their Brethren, when the present dispensation so eminently calls for it. A blast from Heaven will come forth upon the Estates, Families, Names, Spirits of such professors who withhold bread from the hungry, and cast it not upon the waters in such a day. Never was such an opportunity put into the hands of any generations, to shew much kindnesse to Christ and his Saints, as at this day, never such a time to *lay up much treasure in Heaven,*

8. The

8. The day calls for resignation to the will of God, to suffer or to do according to his good pleasure. The Lord hath triumphed in some of his suffering ones, who have gloriously overcome by the Blood of the Lamb; not loving their lives unto the death; 'tis possible some others may be called forth in the same way, many to prisons, and much hardship; Oh! let us be resigned up to the will of Jesus Christ, to be contented he should glorify himself upon us which way hee plealeth: Live upon that faithful saying, *2 Tim. 2. v. 11, 12. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*; what more can be desired?

You have the *promise* of Jesus Christ *to be with you* in what he calls you to, and you have the rich *experience* of your Brethren of his *faithfulness* therein, who triumphed over death, in a spirit of glory that was

upon them ; for the Lords Prisoners, even in every Prison of *England*, their hearts are full of the praises of the Lord, crying (to the amazement of their Persecutors) Blessed be the Lord for a Prison ; let not our Brethren be discouraged, for Christ will meet them, and walk with them there : This may quiet the hearts of all Saints, and not be troubled, in case the Providence of God so dispose of them ; and yet they are to walk wisely in this, not exposing themselves beyond what they see the Lord clearly calling them to, and their own conscience satisfied therein : A good Cause, a good Call, & a good Conscience makes a mans sufferings sweet to him. A servant of Christ may be in a good Cause, and in a good work, in a Christian duty, yet not have a *clear Call* at that time and season to it.

9. The Lord calls for Crucified-
ness to the world ; a weanedness from
all Creature-comforts ; Redemption
from all Earthly Interests , that their
hearts be loosned from them. The
world was got into the hearts of Pro-
fessors, now it must be cast out, and
the heart crucified to it, if they think
to follow the Lamb at this day. Let
every Believer improve his fellowship
with the death of Jesus Christ to this
purpose , and by Faith realize Christ,
and heaven, and glory, and for the
heart to feed upon them, that the
world be not as a weight upon their
spirits ; which hath already drowned,
ensnared, perverted too many, and is
the very bane of profession , if not to
the falling short of the Kingdom of
God, yet as to their own comfort, &
their serving the Lord in their Gene-
ration. Jesus Christ never much ho-
nored a worldly Professor , or if so,
if the world at last took hold of him,
a blast was upon him.

1. In retiring times the Lord calls to waiting, a patient waiting; *I charge you that you sleep not, nor awake my Love till he please*, saith the Spouse, Cant. 2. 7. The Spouse was contented to wait for him: That word of Esy chap. 52. 12. should be pondered by all that fear the Lord; *For ye shall not go out in hast, nor go by flight, for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your Reward*. The word refers to the day of the Captivity; they should not go out by hast, but see the Lord going before them by some signal providence or other, as a call to them to go forth: Then the Lord saith he would be their Reward, though the Enemy pursue them; they should not be able to harm them; the Lord in some Cloud or Pillar of Providence or other, will call forth his People, and they shall hear his voice, and follow him.

Precipitancy is the issue of unbelief; men do not hang upon the Arm of the Lord, when impatience carries them to such precipitancy.

Specially let us take heed to this, When the Lord is casting in such *Harbingers as fore-runners of his coming*, by signs and wonders in the Heaven, and on the Earth, and on the Seas; yea, it may be by *special Vision* to some of his Servants, and the expectation of Saints generally raised to look for him. Oh let us wait, for he will bring distresse upon his Enemies, that they shall walk as blind men; Neither shall their Silver nor their Gold be able to deliver them in the Day of the Lords Wrath upon them, Zeph. i. 17. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their iniquity, and the Earth shall disclose her blood. Isa. 26.v. last.

11. As Saints are patiently to wait, so also to take heed that they do not fall asleep: I say, the Lord delayeth, &c to let them be girt up, as expecting their Lord calls, and be ready to follow him *wheresoever he goeth, &c.* let them not say in their hearts, that the Lord hath forsaken his people, that he is carrying the gospel from *England*, that it is like to be as in the *Bohemian* day; and so be consulting to make haste by flight into other Countreys (unless such whose case may be peculiar) verily this would be for a provocation; this would be the bitter fruit of *unbelief*: lo, the Lord will hide you in your own land, and keep you as the apple of his Eye, (*hide thy selfe as it were for a little moment*) fret not against the Lord, though you are called off from your publike Assemblies, and your Ministers laid as dead: Verily the Lord, who holdeth his Stars in his right hand, will cause them to shine forth again, and they shall give a more glorious

glorious light; the Lord will be against the foolish Shepherds that would devour the Flock, and will deliver them out of their mouths, and he will make them as the *dung of the Earth*; they shall no more *speake in the Name of the Lord*; but the Haile-storm shall sweep away the refuge of lyes, and the eyes of this generation shall see it. Be making ready for the glorious appearance of the Lord, and cry, *Make hast my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.*

12. *Wait for an Anointing of Light, Zeal and Magnanimity*, to execute the vengeance of the Lord upon the beast; for Wrath is determined from the Lord, and the Nations shall tremble because of it, and the Cup of it shall speedily be put into their hands; though they have said, *A confederacy*, and there is a healing and peace among them, and the *Testimony lyes dead*, yet the

the Lord will come upon them as the breach of many waters. Let that word of our Lord dwell upon your hearts; for the day of it is coming upon the World, Luke 21. 25. &c. *And there shall be signes in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the Earth* **DISTRESS of NATIONS;** *with perplexity, the Sea, and the waters roaring, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth; for the Power of Heaven shall be shaken; and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a Cloud, with Power and great glory: And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.*

No age of the world hath produced such a series of Signs and Wonders as this hath done, in these two years last past, (which are still multiplied) which though neglected and blasphemed by a generation of scoffers,

fers, yet are to be had in reverence by all that fear the Lord, and regard the operations of his hands: Which signs usually bespeak distresse of Nations; and the Saints that observe them, are called to lift up their heads. The voice of the Lord to Egypt in the signes and wonders of that day, was, *Let my people go, that they may serve me*, Exod. 16. 14, 16. ch. 8. 1. ch. 9. 1. 13. ch. 10. 3. And when Pharoah refused to let the People of God go free that they might serve the Lord, and hardened himself against the wonders of God, it proved his and the Egyptians destruction, and wrath was upon them, and the Lord by a strong hand let his people go. But this Consideration would require a larger discussion. Let what hath been hinted, help you to a patient waiting; let us say with good Jeremiah, Chap. 14. vers. last. *Art not thou he, Oh Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee, for thou hast made all these things.*

The

The Lord will raise the expectation of his Saints, (as he hath already begun) and then he will come into them, *Psal 9. 15.* then, 'tis but for a moment, a *little* moment, nay, but *as it were*, a little moment, scarce to be call'd a little moment, but *as it were* so; and the *indignation shall be over-past*: The Lord would assure his poor people; That he waits but his *first* season, as if delay were more grievous to him than to his people: Who would not wait for such a God? Oh! *blessed be all they that wait for him*, Isa. 30. 18. Take that word which the Lord hath spoken to one or another of his poor servants, *Pf. 37-34.* Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land when the wicked are cut off: **THOU SHALT SEE IT.** *Amen.*

FINIS.

ion
be-
em,
ent,
, a
lit-
the
The
ple;
, as
him
not
e all
ake
po-
f-r-
ord,
kalt
ck-
LT